

A HAND-BOOK
FOR
RULING ELDERS.

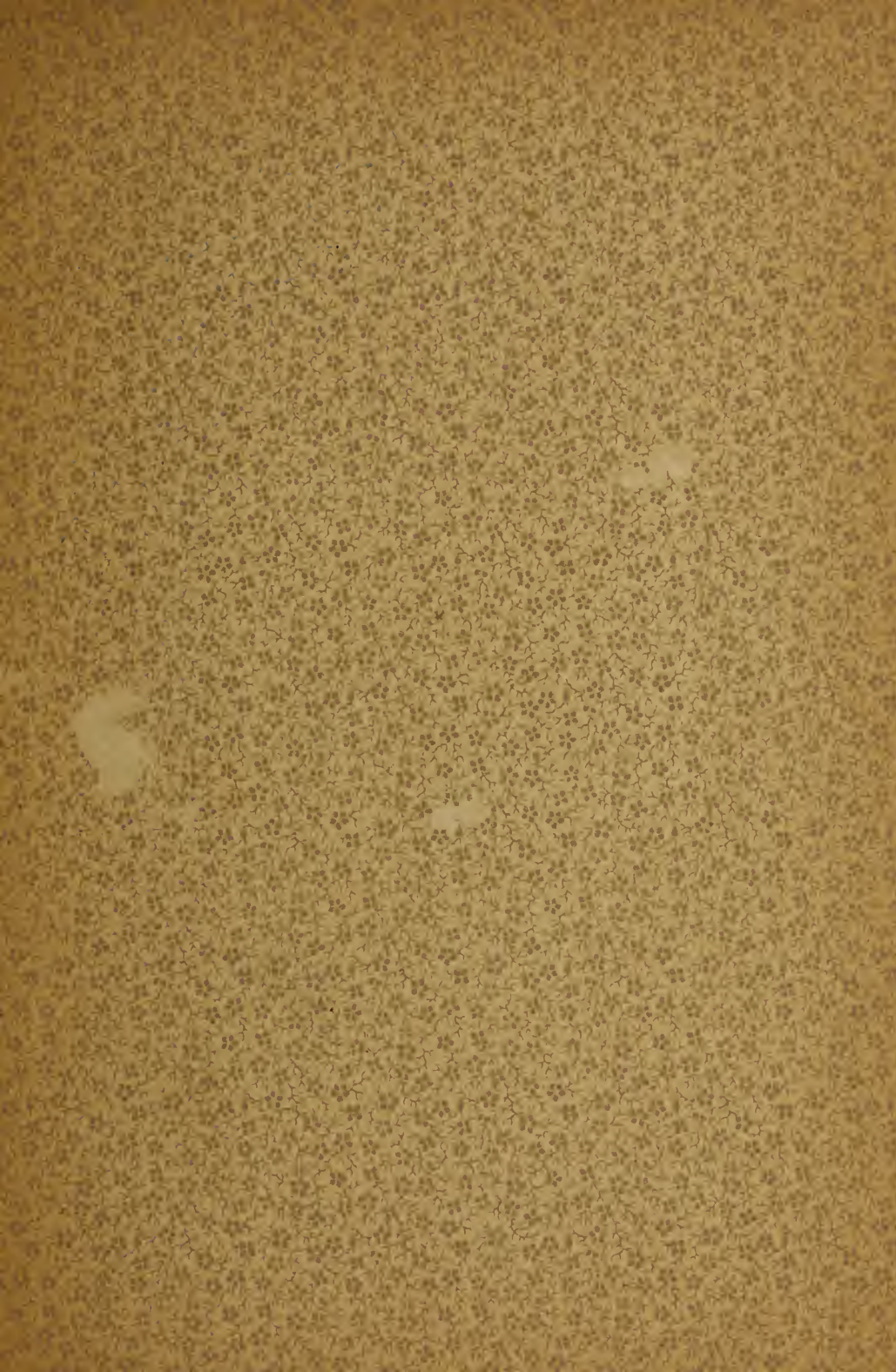


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A HAND-BOOK
FOR
RULING ELDERS.

BY
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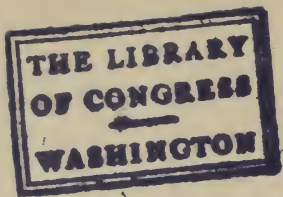
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INTRODUCTION.

THE writer of this little treatise was appointed by Enoree Presbytery to prepare a manual for the use of ruling elders. The need for such a work was very apparent. Many of the churches held religious services only once a month, and several of them were vacant. Special demands were made upon the elders, and it was evident that the prosperity of these churches depended largely upon their fidelity. It was felt that a clearer and more enlarged conception of the office and duties of the elder was needed both by the members of the churches and the elders themselves.

It was thought that a hand-book containing not only instruction, but also some optional forms and practical suggestions would be of great service. Several manuals have been prepared for ministers, to assist them in the discharge of their ministerial duties, and have proved helpful. Why should not our elders have something corresponding to aid them in the performance of their duties?

Many of them, who are pious and useful men, have never enjoyed the advantages of a classical education, and have never been trained in the art of public speaking. They are sometimes under the necessity of undertaking certain duties belonging to their office for which they do not feel themselves thoroughly qualified. To such, especially, a practical hand-book may be of much service. The design of this manual is wholly practical. It was prepared with special reference to the large body of ruling elders in our rural districts. The author has enlarged the plan which he first projected, hoping that he might furnish a book which would be of general service to the church.

For the sake of brevity many important matters have been excluded. The argument for the scriptural authority for the office of ruling elder is about the same as that which may be found in any of the standard works on Presbyterianism, with the exception that the writer has taken much higher ground than the majority of his brethren. We are aware of the existing prejudice in our church against the use of forms. The General Assembly, while not opposing their use for special services, has declined to adopt and authorize any particular set of forms. Written formularies of worship are uncongenial to American Presbyterianism.

At the same time, the optional use of certain forms, prepared by individuals for occasional and special services, is in entire accordance with the spirit of liberty which the church cherishes. The few forms contained in this hand-book are intended more particularly for the use of those elders who have no gift of prayer. They may be suggestive to others and helpful to devotional expression.

Selections of Scripture for the sick-room and the house of mourning have been printed in full for the sake of convenience. A form for a funeral service, compiled from various sources, has been inserted for the use of elders who are called upon in the absence of the pastor to conduct funerals. An order of service for a Sunday-school, for public worship in the pastor's absence, and for a prayer-meeting have been introduced with special reference to our young elders who are without experience and training.

The manual includes the form for a call for pastoral services, taken from our Book of Church Order, with some explanations. Calls presented to Presbytery are frequently sent back to the churches because they are not properly made out. Confusion and delay are thus brought about.

A constitution for a Christian workers' so-

ciety is given as suggestive of certain lines and methods of work for churches which are not organized for active service. A docket for sessional use is also inserted. Sessions often meet and neglect many important matters because they follow no special order of business. The General Assembly's parliamentary rules are also added for the convenience of elders.

The writer fully recognizes the difficulties under which our elders labor, knowing that most of them are men of business, necessarily occupied very closely with their temporal affairs. He is aware of the many discouragements they meet with, and of the meagre opportunities they enjoy in the way of special training for their great responsibilities. If this manual proves to be of any help to them, the author will be more than recompensed for his labor.

A HAND-BOOK FOR RULING ELDERS.

CHAPTER I.

A BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY FOR THE OFFICE OF RULING ELDER.

THE word "elder" is a translation from the Greek word *presbuteros*, and from the Hebrew word *saken*. It is doubtless of Jewish-Christian origin, having a much wider meaning at first, and gradually coming into use to designate a particular class of church officers in the Christian church. The word has primary reference to age, with the experience and dignity which go with it, and, derivatively, to official authority. The idea of government by representative elders is very ancient, and constantly reappears in Bible history both in civil and religious affairs. Under the leadership of Moses, elders were chosen as representatives of the people; and we read of them in the times

of Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, and the Jewish Captivity. These officers had great weight in matters of highest importance to church and state. They had not only civil but religious duties to perform under the Jewish commonwealth, in which the church and the state were temporarily united.

The Jewish mind was thoroughly familiar with the idea of the representative elder, and it was very naturally carried into the synagogue system. The origin of the synagogue cannot be determined with accuracy. It had evidently been in existence a considerable time when the new dispensation began. Each one of them had a bench of elders in control of its spiritual affairs, one of whom was chosen as president.

The New Testament church was constructed upon the model of the synagogue. The Hebrew word for elder was translated into the Greek word *presbuteros*, which was used to describe a class of church officers, without any particular explanation. Christ and his apostles frequently visited the synagogues, and made them the base of their operations. The general features of this worship were very naturally transferred to the Christian church. Some of the earliest Christian churches were very probably converted synagogues, the elders of the latter be-

coming elders in the former. The name "Presbyterian," by which we are designated as a branch of the Christian church, indicates that we are differentiated from other Christian bodies, especially by our views of church government. Yet Presbyterianism is not simply a form of ecclesiology, but represents also a certain interpretation of the Bible in the matter of doctrine and the sacraments.

Presbyterianism, so far as government is concerned, rests upon three fundamental principles found in God's word and in the early church, viz., the parity of the ministry, government by elders or presbyters, and the unity of the church. The church is governed by assemblies composed of presbyters or elders of two classes. It is a representative government dispensed through a gradation of courts, the General Assembly being the supreme court, and thus conserves Christian liberty, evangelical order, the rights of individuals, at the same time embodying the idea of unity. It differs from Episcopacy, which lodges ecclesiastical power in its bishops, and from Congregationalism or Independency, in which the people themselves are the governing body, and saves us from both tyranny and mobocracy.

This form of church government we believe to be scriptural, practical, and best adapted to

the development and extension of the kingdom of God on earth.

What is the testimony of the New Testament writings respecting the office of ruling elder in the Christian church?

There was evidently a plurality of elders in every church, who presided over its spiritual affairs. The Apostle Paul writes to Titus: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest ordain elders in every city," etc. (Titus i. 5.) Paul and Barnabas in their missionary work went everywhere preaching the gospel, founding churches, and "they ordained elders in every church." (Acts xiv. 23.) Paul sent from Miletus to Ephesus for "the elders of the church." (Acts xx. 17.) James exhorts the sick to send for "the elders of the church." (James v. 14.) Other passages might be quoted proving clearly that it was a rule in the primitive church to have a company of elders in every church. We are not informed as to their precise functions; but it appears that some of them devoted themselves mainly to governing, ruling, directing, while others gave themselves mainly to preaching and teaching. We are almost forced to this belief from the following considerations: Many of the churches established by the apostles must have been very small and weak at first, and there

was no need, therefore, for a company of preachers for each one.

Many of the primitive churches were very poor at the beginning, and it is difficult to believe that each one had the ability to support a number of ministers, especially as there was no central treasury, and no sustentation fund from which to draw.

Besides, we can scarcely believe that in these small missionary churches there could have been found at their organization a sufficient number of Christians educated and trained to form a company of preachers whose business it was to devote themselves exclusively to the ministry of the word. There was no seminary from which to draw in those days.

The Scriptures teach that there was a difference between these elders: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." (1 Tim. v. 17.) Here it is implied that some were mainly engaged in ruling, while others were chiefly absorbed in preaching.

Besides, there are several passages of Scripture in which there is reference to an office for ruling and governing as its chief function: "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy,

let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that *ruleth* with diligence," etc. (Rom. xii. 6-8.) Again, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, *governments*, diversities of tongues." (1 Cor. xii. 28.)

Still further, there seems to be a necessity for ruling elders for the maintenance of order and discipline, and for the development and extension of the church. No one man can do all the work of instruction, exhortation, visitation, and discipline in the church of average size. Those churches which reject the eldership have partial substitutes, calling them by a different name.

It seems clear, therefore, that each of the primitive churches had a plurality of elders. Some were occupied mostly with the ministry of the word, while others gave themselves mainly to ruling. In the judgment of the writer sufficient evidence has not been adduced from the Scriptures to justify the very wide distinction which is practically made by our church between these two classes of presbyters. We believe that the teaching function, in a re-

stricted sense, belongs to the ruling elder's office, for the following reasons: The elder or presbyter is a bishop, and "aptness to teach" is made an indispensable qualification for the office of bishop without exception. Therefore the elder must be, in a certain sense, a teacher. There is no escape from this conclusion if our premises are correct. The identity of presbyter and bishop is placed beyond question by many passages. In Acts xx. 28, Paul addresses as bishops the same rulers of the Ephesian Church who had just before been called (vs. 17) presbyters. Paul directs Titus to ordain "presbyters" in the churches of Crete, and, in stating the qualifications for these officers, speaks of them under the name "bishop." "Ordain elders in every city, if any be blameless," etc., "for a bishop must be blameless."

The apostle in his Epistle to the Philippians salutes the saints in Philippi "with the bishops and deacons," making no mention of presbyters, which fact can only be explained upon the assumption that bishops and presbyters were identical. This identity was acknowledged by the most learned church fathers, by the best theologians of the middle ages, and is admitted to-day by some of the best scholars of the Episcopal Church. Dr. Whitby, for instance, says: "Both the Latin and Greek fathers do,

with one consent, declare that bishops were called presbyters and presbyters bishops in apostolic times, the names being then common." Our first premise, therefore, is unquestionably true.

The second premise is indisputable: "A bishop must be apt to teach." (1 Tim. iii. 2.) It was Paul's purpose to instruct Timothy respecting all the congregational officers. As the office of ruling elder is higher and more important than that of deacon, it is inconceivable that the apostle should give directions concerning the latter and leave the former entirely out. The words "bishops and deacons" are exhaustive of all the officers of a church.

If it is indispensable that the elder should be "apt to teach," and "hold forth the faithful word that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers," how are we to reconcile this statement of qualifications with the fact that some of the company of elders in each church devoted themselves to ruling, and others to preaching? When the apostle asserts that elders or bishops must be "apt to teach," it by no means follows that all elders gave themselves *wholly* to the work of preaching and teaching officially; but it does follow irresistibly that the teaching function to *some extent* belongs to the office of elder.

The words "apt to teach," spoken of by the apostle, must be regarded in a general sense. There are various degrees of knowledge, and various ways of giving instruction. All elders should be able to train the young, to guide inquirers, to comfort the troubled, and defend the essential truths of christianity against objectors. A man may not have the gift of public speech, may not be qualified to undertake the work of a public teacher, and yet be "apt to teach," and able to defend God's truth. He may do a great deal of good in the line of teaching in many ways.

In the judgment of the writer, the leaders of the Reformation, in attempting to restore the functions of the eldership, made them narrower than they were in apostolic times, and lowered the office. We seem to be satisfied with what appears to be a great inconsistency. We insist that presbyter and bishop are identical, and we establish our point triumphantly against the prelatist, and yet we quietly strip the presbyter of nearly all the functions of the bishop.

Notwithstanding some difference of opinion as to the nature of the office of elder, the lay theory has been practically adopted. This theory maintains that the ruling elder is only a representative of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and

discipline in conjunction with the pastor or minister. While government is the essential idea of his office, we do not believe that teaching is excluded. Paul instructed the elders of Ephesus to "feed (shepherd) the church of God" over which they were placed as overseers, because "grievous wolves would enter in, not sparing the flock," plainly meaning that he intended them to guard the purity of Christian doctrine. In Hebrews xiii. 7, the apostle associates ruling and teaching very closely: "Remember those who have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." It is not going too far to say that the large majority of our elders and of our church members have entirely too low a conception of the nature of this office, of its dignity and its responsibilities. According to God's word the elder is a ruler in God's house, and a teacher, in a restricted sense, charged with the spiritual welfare of his flock.

The second Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland advocated the higher or presbyter theory of the eldership, but it was not carried strictly into practice. It gave a wider scope to the office, and permitted elders to preach in their own churches when they were qualified. Differences of opinion, however, on this point

are compatible with strong views in favor of the Presbyterian government of the church. It seems that we must take high grounds on the subject, and clothe the elder with more authority, dignity, and responsibility than we practically do, or else take lower ground holding that our system is based upon a wise and judicious ecclesiastical policy, but not upon a distinct and special divine warrant.

We are aware that there are some difficulties connected with the higher theory, but they are fewer than those connected with the lower. We maintain that according to Scripture they are a part of the Christian ministry, and derive their authority from Jesus Christ the head of the church. If we desire to promote their efficiency, it is necessary for us to commence at this point, and impress the truth that they are office-bearers of Christ's church along with the pastor; and the people should be taught to look up to them as their spiritual rulers, advisers, and instructors. Their official character should be recognized as lying at the foundation of what is required of them. The tendency to give the elder a lower position than that given in the word of God is a great weakness in our Presbyterian system. The power of the Presbyterian Church for good would be increased in unlimited measure if the eldership could be

brought up to the scriptural standard, because our system derives its strength largely from the efficiency of the eldership. It should be clearly understood, that while elders are chosen representatives of the people, Christ the head of the church is the source of all the authority and power committed to them. They are selected as qualified, and called of God, to perform the duties which Christ has enjoined.

There is a sense in which all elders or presbyters and bishops are equal. In the matter of ruling and governing, which is the central and basal idea of the presbyterate, they stand on equal footing. In the courts of the church they have the same rights and privileges. They differ in this, that the minister is specially called and set apart to the work of *officially* preaching the gospel, while the elder is called and set apart to the work of governing or ruling, at the same time, however, exercising the right to teach in a restricted sense.

CHAPTER II.

THE DUTIES OF ELDERS.

OUR Book of Church Order sums up the duties as follows: "Ruling elders, the immediate representatives of the people, are chosen by them, that, in conjunction with the pastor, or minister, they may exercise government and discipline, and take the oversight of the spiritual interests of the particular church, and also of the church generally, when called thereto. It appertains to this office, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to their charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enter therein. Evils which they cannot correct by private admonition they should bring to the notice of the session. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick; they should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the church; and all those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of charity are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. They should pray with and for

the people; they should be careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached word among the flock; and should inform the pastor of cases of sickness, of affliction and awakening, and of all others which may need his special attention." In examining the duties of the elder a little more in detail, let us first consider the elder in the family:

I. THE ELDER IN THE FAMILY.

Most of our elders are heads of families. The apostle tells us that their work begins at home, and he insists upon the proper government of their own households as requisite to efficient rule in the church. An elder must be "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" It is true that the proper government of the household is the duty of every Christian man who is the head of a family. But it devolves upon the elder, in a special manner, to set an example in this respect, inasmuch as his official standing and his usefulness are affected by it. We read in the New Testament of "the church in the house." A Christian family ought to be a little church. The churchly character of the family is prominent throughout the old and new dis-

pensations. The passover was observed in the household, and the children of each family were instructed in its significance. The Israelites went up, as families, three times a year to worship at Jerusalem. Under the New Testament dispensation, when the church assumes its final form, the same idea is equally prominent, and the family is the home of the church. From the earliest period in the church's history the duty of family religious instruction and discipline has been emphasized. The theory and practice of family government have undergone considerable change during the last quarter of a century, and there is a growing laxity upon the part of parents in the matter of training and discipline.

Lack of the proper exercise of parental authority is one of the weak points in the present type of family life. It cannot be said of many, as it was said of the father of the faithful, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him." Commanding is not popular, and the drift of the times is against it. Early self-assertion, irreverence, contumacy, and precocious individualism are characteristics of the young of our day. Under these circumstances, it is especially incumbent upon the elder to set a right example as the head of a family, and to rule well his own

house. If his home is a scene of disorder; if his children are neglected or mismanaged; if he fails to command proper respect, he can hardly expect the members of his church to look to him as their spiritual adviser and guide. It is true that children sometimes turn out badly under the best parental control, but, as a rule, the words of the wise man are verified: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Neglect of family worship is another indication of the decline of family religion. The elder cannot carry out the injunction to "rule well his own house" without establishing the family altar. With unfailing regularity he should observe family worship. No pressure of business or of social engagements should induce him to neglect this important duty. He should require his children to attend family devotions as well as the religious exercises of God's house. It is his duty so to conduct himself before the members of his household as to impress them with the idea that the kingdom of God has the first place in his heart, and that it is his supreme desire to see them true Christians. If his object in life is to accumulate a fortune, or to gain distinction, or social advancement, his children will not only see it, but will catch the spirit of his life.

He may be a kind, gentle, loving, liberal father, seeking to make his home bright and attractive, encouraging all innocent amusements and recreations, winning the devotion of his children, and at the same time a godly father, making the atmosphere of the home distinctly Christian. The elder, impressed with a sense of the responsibilities of home, should adopt David's resolution: "I will behave myself wisely, . . . and I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."

A faithful and successful discharge of the duties growing out of domestic relations will enable him to be more efficient in his public duties, and the transition from one to the other will be made easy. The elder, in dispensing hospitality, and in endeavoring to make his home attractive to young people, should be careful not to encourage a spirit of worldliness. It is very difficult to draw an exact line between what is right and wrong in the way of amusements. If an elder should be very liberal in his views on the subject, and insist upon exercising what he regards as his rights, he is surely bound to see to it that excesses are avoided and that a spirit of worldliness is not encouraged. There is no incompatibility between true piety and a moderate indulgence in all innocent amusements. But somehow there are certain

amusements, regarded by many good people as innocent and proper, which do not seem to combine with earnestness of Christian life and with consecration to Christ. The elder who does not object to these things, and makes his home a sort of headquarters for such amusements, should consider very carefully whether he is not endangering his influence for good as a ruler in the house of God. If his home should be made headquarters also for religious meetings, where earnest work is done for the glory of God, the case would probably be very different. To make amusement an end is one thing, to make it a means is quite another thing. It loses most of its danger when it is subordinated to higher ends. Every elder, therefore, should endeavor to make his home a model Christian home, to make it an attractive place, an instructive place, a safe place, and a holy place. Everything ought to be renounced which tends to destroy personal religion, or to weaken the influence of religion in the minds of others, or to put a stumbling-block in the way of many, or to give offence to the feelings of conscientious fellow-Christians.

These principles must be admitted to be correct, and can generally be applied without serious difficulty by those who are thoroughly spiritually-minded. Indeed, it may be said

with truth that nearly all questions, relating to wordly amusements, will be easily answered just in proportion to the depth and earnestness of one's religion.

II. THE ELDER IN BUSINESS AND IN SOCIETY.

Occupying the high position of a spiritual ruler in the house of God, the elder should be fully alive to the fact that his influence for good and his usefulness in the church depend largely upon the character he maintains in business and in society. It is true that every Christian is bound to be upright, truthful and fair in his worldly transactions, yet, in a special sense, it devolves upon the officers of God's church to walk circumspectly and to maintain a reputation for honesty and integrity. It is a matter of great importance that they should so deport themselves in secular affairs as to win the confidence, respect and esteem of their fellow-men. Though they may be faithful in attendance upon the services of the church, and active in the discharge of their official duties; though they may pray with fluency and speak with force in religious meetings, their usefulness is seriously crippled if they are regarded by the community as men lacking purity and integrity of character. If they are skinflints and sharpers, men who will take advantage of others in

trade by misrepresentation and trickery ; if they are covetous and avaricious, they cannot expect to accomplish much in their religious official capacity. The world is sometimes deceived about men, but the deception is only temporary. Every man is the product of his thoughts, feelings, purposes, habits, and experiences, and cannot conceal his true inwardness for any great length of time. Men are often misrepresented and slandered, but, as a rule, the reputation of a man who has lived long in a community is generally in accordance with his real worth and his real life. Church officers cannot be too careful in guarding their reputation and avoiding all appearance of evil. It is better to endure a wrong than to have the semblance of cupidity or fraud.

Every man must find his Christian life largely in connection with those secular duties which occupy nearly all of his time. The divorce of religion and business is pharisaic and not Christian. Religion enters into business, sanctifies it, elevates it, and lightens its burdens. The merchant's religion must be found largely in the bounds of commercial life ; the politician's religion in the bounds of politics ; the teacher's religion in the school-room. The same Ten Commandments and the same Sermon on the Mount which are applicable to church life and

household life are also applicable to commerce and politics. There is but one basis of ethics for all the departments of human activity.

It is also important that elders should be men of high character in their social relations. Beyond the narrow circle of home, and even the wider circle of business, there is a large number of persons brought into connection with us in various ways, and our intercourse with them brings weighty responsibilities. The officers of God's church are in a peculiar sense bound to endeavor to purify and elevate the tone of society around them. They should studiously avoid that deportment which would give them the name of "worldly men." While they should encourage hospitality by their example, they should avoid display, extravagance, and cumbrous luxury.

III. THE ELDER IN THE CHURCH.

In general terms it may be said that it is the duty of the elder to look after the spiritual interests of all his flock, and to do everything in his power for the furtherance of the same. Paul said to the Ephesian elders: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." The

command "to feed the flock" is a very large one. The word "shepherd," which is the literal translation, carries the idea of guidance, protection, provision, tender care, and personal interest. The perfunctory service rendered by some elders, namely, attendance in a mechanical way on meetings of session, and occasionally of other church courts, and assistance in the distribution of the elements at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, seems to be regarded by them as an adequate discharge of their official duties. But how small a part of an elder's responsibility is discharged even by a faithful attendance upon the meetings of session and the higher courts, and by regular service at the administration of the communion! Let us endeavor to draw out in detail some of the duties plainly involved in the exhortations given to elders:

(a), It is the duty of the elder *to visit the members of his church*. It is impossible for him to take proper oversight over them, look after their spiritual interests, and give them due attention, without coming in personal contact with them in their homes. To facilitate this work, the church, if sufficiently large, should be divided into sections or districts, and the care of each section should be assigned to one or more elders for a fixed period. In

this way the elders will come to know all the members, and everything peculiar in the situation and character of each one. They may find it a little difficult at first on account of the demands of business, but if thorough system is observed, very little time is required. If each elder would give two or three hours a week, or even a fortnight, or one afternoon a month, a great deal might be accomplished in the way of visitation. In a church of average size every family could be visited by an elder at least once a year, if there was a willingness on the part of each one to give one afternoon in each month. In order to reach the best results, there should be real official visitation, and not a mere hurried call and exchange of courtesies. It is scarcely possible to overestimate the benefits of such visits. Families are thus brought into close contact with the church, and made to feel that they are a living part of it. The members learn to regard the elders as their friends, and turn to them as well as to their minister for advice in trouble, and for comfort and sympathy in affliction. In many churches there are elders who have so little acquaintance with the members of their charge, that they do not even know all their names.

(b), It is especially incumbent *upon elders to visit the sick, the afflicted, and the poor.* "Is

any sick among you, let them call for the elders of the church, and let them pray," etc. The elder, besides giving spiritual comfort, may sometimes find it in his power to render aid in temporal respects, or induce others to do so who have the ability. Our Saviour is here on earth represented in an especial manner by his sick, suffering, and needy children; and service rendered to them is service rendered to him: "I was sick, and ye visited me." Does not our Lord undergo a perpetual incarnation in his church? The voice of the sick and the destitute is to the Christian the voice of Jesus. Their miseries are the miseries of Christ. Surely the officers of Christ's church ought to be in tenderest sympathy with his suffering body.

"Oh, dreamers, dreaming that your faith is keeping
 All service free from blot,
 Christ daily walks your streets, sick, suffering, weeping,
 And ye perceive him not."

The afflicted as well as the sick have special claims upon their spiritual rulers. Many of the most precious promises of the Bible relate to afflictions. Our Saviour when on earth set us an example of tender sympathy for the sorrowing. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to *visit* the fatherless and the widows in their affliction," etc.

There are many who are willing to give liberally of their substance to a relief fund, but are not willing, like their Lord, to become "acquainted with grief." Benevolence enlarges and develops Christian character, but deep and tender personal sympathy with the suffering and the sorrowing is necessary to give completeness to character. The officers of the church must not only give money and advice, but they must *visit*. There is many a house of sorrow in which sympathy is worth more than gold. Many elders shrink from the duty of comforting the bereaved, and excuse themselves upon the ground of incompetency. Even if they cannot give spiritual instruction, they can at least show a heart-felt sympathy, which sometimes accomplishes more good. They may read a few appropriate verses from Scripture, and offer a brief prayer. The obligation to visit and comfort the bereaved rests entirely too lightly upon most elders. This is regarded as a duty which the minister only can perform. But it is a great mistake. Times of sorrow, when God softens the hearts of his children by fatherly chastenings, furnish a grand opportunity for elders to endear themselves to their people, and to strengthen Christian bonds. Any genuine expression of sympathy, any kindness shown, any help rendered, when the heart

is raw under crushing grief, will leave its impress forever. No definite rules can be laid down for the guidance of those who visit the sick, the needy and the bereaved. The tact and delicacy and adaptation necessary to the most successful discharge of this duty are rather the fruit of deep piety and sincere sympathy than of social rules. Genuine, ardent love is intuitive in perception, independent in action, and original in method. Love has deep insight, and sees more quickly than reason, and often determines at a glance what is the best and most appropriate thing to be done. It is rich in invention, and is not bound in its service by the demands of conscience.

(c), It is very clearly the duty of elders to give careful and earnest attention to the *backsliding members of their flock*. The very name *ruling elder* implies the specialty of this obligation. And yet there are many who do not seem to feel that they have any responsibility in this direction. It is not often that Christians fall suddenly into great and heinous sins. As a rule, their spiritual decline is gradual, and begins with the neglect of the means of grace. It is important, therefore, that they should be admonished promptly when the first signs of backsliding appear.

When any member neglects the public ordi-

nances of religion without cause, it is a sure sign of degeneracy, and should not be allowed to pass unnoticed. The officers of the church should kindly remonstrate with such a one and remind him of his Christian obligations. The pastor, of course, shares this responsibility. When members are guilty of grave offences, such as intemperance or profanity or immorality, there should be no delay on the part of church officers to earnestly endeavor to bring them to repentance and reformation. If an offence is of a private character, efforts should be made to induce the transgressor to make acknowledgment and reparation to the injured party. If, however, it is of a public character, the offender should be kindly urged to repentance and public acknowledgment. The honor and purity of Christ's church must be protected, and the scriptural standard of morality must be sustained. The elder is invested with a several power—power to admonish, rebuke, exhort, and comfort through his individual influence, as well as with a joint power, which is exercised in courts in voting, admitting, excluding, warning, censuring. The duty of restoring the erring is plainly taught in God's word: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." (Gal. vi. 1.) While the

restoration of a fallen brother is the work of divine grace, yet God uses his children as instruments to accomplish it. Through human forgiveness, sympathy, and intercession, wanderers from God are enabled to realize the divine compassion and goodness. We have reason to fear that there is criminal negligence in administering, rebuking, and disciplining the backsliding and excluding the unworthy. The blessing of God cannot rest upon a church which allows open sin among its members to go on unrebuked and unnoticed. The accursed thing must be removed from the camp. It is a stone in the King's highway, which must be removed before he will come to subdue the impenitent and manifest his victorious grace. The church which is burdened with a number of doubtful professors, of worldly members, and backsliding Christians is in a very sad condition. The most devoted and earnest preacher in charge of such a flock is robbed of one of the greatest sources of power, for a godly membership is the minister's right hand of strength, inasmuch as they are the vindication of the truths he proclaims, and a mighty power with God and man.

The work to which we have been referring is one of great difficulty and delicacy. It requires wisdom and tact, and a combination of

gentleness and firmness. For its right accomplishment, the best preparation is prayer and holy living and a sincere love for the souls of men.

(*d*), Ruling elders should take *careful oversight of the children of their flock*. Many of us who are rulers fail to realize the peculiarity of our relation to the children under our care. The offspring of believing parents are admitted into the church by baptism, and this gives them special claims upon us. They are within the pale of the church, and are committed to our supervision and care. They are under its government and subject to its discipline. We are therefore bound to take a deep and affectionate interest in them, and watch for their souls as they who must give account. We are solemnly pledged to use all diligence to provide proper instruction and training for them, and to endeavor to save them from the snares and perils of the world. Through the formative period of childhood and youth our eye should be upon them, and we should never cease to pray and labor for them until they are brought to Christ. Baptized members who grow up to manhood and persist in rejecting Christ and living in sin, should be followed with tender interest, and kindly admonished and reminded of their relations to the church. They should be dealt with

faithfully, and disciplined, if necessary. The church has lost many of her children by forsaking them too soon and failing to do her duty towards them. She should never forget that she is a foster-mother to her children, that she has fixed upon them the seal of the covenant, and can never secure exemption from the duty of Christian nurture. While the parent has his distinctive obligations, the church, as an organization, has likewise most solemn duties to perform. Presbyterian practice does not agree with Presbyterian theory. A list of all the baptized children should be kept by the session, and should be revised from time to time. God's covenant is with his people and *their seed*. Their children are heirs of the promise, and should be reminded, as soon as they have a sufficient degree of intelligence, of their privileges and obligations. Elders should be careful not to interfere with parental rights, and should seek to influence the child through the parent. The children of God's people are the hope of the church. Its rulers should keep this in mind in its organization and in all their plans to advance its interests. They should be zealous workers in the Sunday-school, which is the nursery of the church, where Christ's children are trained. Elders should not only take an active part in this most important work, but

should see to it that all the children under their supervision are properly instructed in the word of God. In addition to the study of the regular lessons, they should be required to memorize a few verses of Scripture. Dr. James W. Alexander, one of the most suggestive writers on Sunday-school teaching, gives the following emphatic testimony on this point: "Having been, in one or another capacity, busied about Sunday-schools for forty years, I venture my judgment that if a pupil must forego one or the other—the explanation of the meaning by question and answer, or the possession of the text in his memory *verbatim*—he had better let go the former. There is no part of household and juvenile learning so valuable as what in good old idiomatic mother-English is called 'getting verses by heart.' Having almost worn out my eyes by reading and study, let me testify that of all I ever learned I most prize is the knowledge of the English Bible, and for one verse I know by heart I wish I knew a hundred."

There should be definite teaching also, as to the structure and government of our church. Without being controversial or comparative, it should be distinct and positive. A few questions from the Shorter Catechism should be memorized by the scholars regularly. Many

of our children grow up utterly ignorant of the meaning of Presbyterianism, having never been taught its distinctive principles and scriptural grounds; and this accounts for the easy manner in which they sometimes drift into other churches.

Our elders should be fully alive to the fact that the Sunday-school occupies a place of almost incalculable importance in the development and extension of the church. It furnishes a large percentage of the additions received on profession of faith, as statistics clearly show. As a rule, too, those who are received into the church while young make the most valuable members. Spurgeon, speaking on this point, says, "I have, during the last year, received forty children into church membership. Among those I have had at any time to exclude from the church, out of a church of twenty-seven hundred members, I have never had to exclude a single one who was received while yet a child." A similar testimony is given by many successful pastors. It becomes our officers, therefore, to fully inform themselves of all the improved modern methods for Sunday-school work. Means should be provided, if possible, for the proper training of teachers. Teachers' meetings should be held weekly for the study of the current lessons. Normal classes, normal insti-

tutes and conventions should be encouraged. The Sunday-school has proved to be a great evangelizing agency, and persistent efforts should be made to bring into them the multitudes of young people outside the church who are without religious instruction and care. Often the best service you can render a godless home is to induce one or more of the children to attend Sunday-school. Many families have been brought into the church in this way. It is very important that intelligent and spiritual teachers be selected, who will take personal interest in their pupils, and endeavor to lead them to Christ. It is a serious error to suppose that any one can teach. There is too much mere formal instruction in our schools. Definite spiritual results can only be obtained by loving contact and earnest endeavor to reach the heart and conscience.

The teacher should regard himself as the pastor of his class, and should realize his superior advantages for reaching the hearts of his pupils and moulding their characters.

Another point of importance is the exaltation of God's word. The Sunday-school should be the Bible school of the church. In these days of black-boards, orchestras, story-books, and appliances of all kinds, the Bible itself may fail to be properly emphasized. Children should be

taught to handle their Bibles, to find the verses promptly, to compare Scripture with Scripture, and to have the utmost reverence for the word of God.

We warn our elders against an evil which has been gradually creeping into the church. Unwise and unwarranted means are sometimes used to catch the young. We should never forget the nature of children, and should endeavor to adapt ourselves to them, securing for the Sunday-school an air of brightness and cheerfulness. But some of the modern sugar-plum methods of drawing children should be used cautiously. Christ's way of attracting children will be found in "the long run" to be the best way.

(e), *The maintenance of public worship is another responsibility resting upon elders.* It is plainly their duty as rulers and spiritual overseers to see that the church to which they belong is kept open every Sunday, and that religious exercises are conducted. Prompt measures should be taken to secure a pastor in case of a vacancy. The long interims which often occur are very damaging to the spiritual interests of the congregation. In spite of commendable diligence, however, a long period often elapses before a pastor can be obtained. During this season, if no ministerial help can

be secured, the elders should regularly conduct religious exercises of some kind. The more gifted ones may expound the Scriptures, or lecture, or give an exhortation ; or some one of them may read a sermon or a homily. In the event no one is willing to do this, Sunday-school and Bible-class at least should be maintained without fail. Collection for benevolent objects should be taken up regularly, and the people should be taught that giving is a part of divine worship.

In our rural districts very few churches have the privilege of enjoying pastoral ministrations of the word every Sunday. Many of them have preaching service only once a month. Experience has shown how difficult it is for a church to prosper under such circumstances. Here is a wide field for the exercise of the elder's gifts. The only hope of many of our country churches lies in a consecrated, active eldership. The over-burdened pastor, who is compelled to travel frequently hundreds of miles a month, and can only come in contact with his people occasionally, needs a faithful band of officers in each one of his churches who will supplement his labors. There are many such elders, thank God, who are a power in the church. We want more of them. Our system of eldership affords peculiar facilities for Christian work, and if it

could be carried out, the power of the church for good would be increased almost beyond measure. She would be a victorious church, and more "terrible than an army with banners." We need no new organization, no new machinery, but the baptism of the Holy Ghost and a new infusion of spiritual life. Organization cannot create life, but life, when nourished, produces organization. The organization which is the product of life is efficient and permanent. The writer knows of feeble churches in rural districts with only monthly preaching service, in which an elder is present every Sunday, who conducts religious exercises and maintains a Sunday-school. A congregation of fair size convenes regularly, and great good is accomplished. In some churches prayer-meetings are conducted wholly by elders, and in a very edifying manner. Dr. Cuyler, a very successful pastor for a long period of time in a metropolitan church, says: "The prayer-meeting is pre-eminently the people's service; and during nearly the whole of my ministry it has been my custom to intrust the charge of the service to the elders, who are the representatives of the congregation. Each elder takes the leadership of the weekly meeting in alphabetical order. He selects the topic to be discussed, and must see to it that the topic is duly announced from

the pulpit on the previous Sabbath. For the right management of the meeting he is responsible, and he should make thorough preparation for the solemn charge committed to him."

For the last quarter of a century nearly all Protestant churches have been considering earnestly the question of the larger employment of lay agency, partly because of the scarcity of ministers, and partly because of the conviction of its special adaptability to certain kinds of work. Even if elders be regarded only as laymen, they may be of incalculable service in meeting these demands of the times. The conviction has fastened itself upon us that there are vast reserves in our Presbyterian Church which have never been brought out. There is a latent power in our eldership which we believe will yet be developed. There is a large amount of talent and piety among them, and they only need encouragement, a broader conception of their office, and proper support from the people.

(f), Ruling elders should take part *in directing and developing all the spiritual forces of the church*. They should be actively interested in forming and maintaining missionary societies, Christian workers' organizations, and young people's associations. There has been much discussion of late years concerning voluntary

societies, without and within the church. Many societies, assuming large proportions, have sprung up outside, having in view the best Christian ends. These organizations of such phenomenal growth have arisen partly because of the failure of the church to meet the demands made upon her. And this failure is partly due to the fact that she has bound herself so closely with rules, definitions, and restrictions, that Christian energy has been somewhat checked. Surely room ought to be found in the church for the development and use of all spiritual forces. If she had made herself more elastic, probably there would not have been so many outside organizations. Societies within the church are a necessity. To bring out all her resources, the work must be divided and distributed. Ample scope should be given for the exercise of individual gifts, and every desire and purpose to do good should be encouraged. Our church has within her the power to adapt herself to all the demands of the hour, without modifying her principles. The laws which Christ laid down for the government of his church will work under all circumstances and all conditions of society. It must be clear to the unprejudiced student of the New Testament that the apostolic policy is one rather of broad outlines and principles

than of fixed, determinate forms. It is hardly possible to carry out rigidly the theory advocated by Dr. Thornwell, that "the form of government for the church and its modes of action are described in the word of God, not merely as to its general principles, but in all its details as completely as the system of faith or moral law; and, therefore, everything for which we cannot produce a 'thus saith the Lord' is unscriptural and unlawful." The attempt to apply it will impair the usefulness of the church, and hamper her in her efforts to utilize all her forces. It will lead to endless tinkering at church machinery, and everlasting digging down to the foundations to see whether they are stable. No good religious enterprise can be projected without prolonged discussions as to its constitutionality and propriety. Societies in the church are entirely legitimate up to a certain point. So long as they are under the supervision of session and presbytery, and work harmoniously and effectively, no voice should be raised against them. Our elders should organize their young people into associations wherever circumstances permit, as a training school in the service of Christ. Dr. Cuyler says: "One of the most effective methods I know of for training new converts is by the agency of a young people's association,

organized in the church and under the oversight of the pastor. There has been such an association in the church which I had the honor to serve for about twenty-five years. The objects of the association are to hold weekly devotional meetings, to promote social intercourse, to visit the sick, to search out and bring in young people, to labor for their conversion, and to do whatever will develop the spiritual life of young Christians. It has been a training school for converts, and, as such, deserves a place beside the Sunday-school in the affections and prayers of the church. I should almost as soon think of conducting a church without the regular officers as without this educational institution. It helps to solve several such questions as how to develop lay element, how to cultivate social intercourse, how to save the young for Christ, and keep them out of the clutch of the devil."

The writer knows of Christian workers' associations in several churches, conducted successfully by elders, and intended to develop the activity of Christians generally, regardless of age, and to advance the interests of Christ's kingdom.

At this point we suggest that the eldership may render most valuable service in times of revival. Inquiry meetings are now in general use by ministers who conduct protracted ser-

vices, with the special view of reaching the unconverted. They may be made very useful when properly managed, and one of the most objectionable features would be removed if godly, intelligent elders would come to the minister's assistance in the work of personal interview with seekers after God. Inquirers would not be left in the hands of inexperienced, impulsive professors, who have only a limited stock of familiar religious phrases, and are often very injudicious in urging an immediate confession of Christ. It falls within the province of the rulers of God's house to direct and instruct seeking souls. Our elders should endeavor to equip themselves as thoroughly as possible for this work. They should be familiar with those passages of Scripture which bear directly upon inquirers. They should study our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus (John iii.) and with the woman of Samaria (John iv.), and the accounts of the conversion of Zaccheus (Luke xviii.), of Lydia, and the jailer (Acts xvi.). Earnest endeavor should be made to discover the hindrances in the way of each inquirer, and the necessity of a complete surrender of heart and will to Christ should be insisted upon. The reception of Christ should always be made the turning point of salvation, and the inquirer should be kept closely to this issue.

Faith should be explained as involving a renunciation of self-righteousness and self-dependence, and a committal of the soul to Christ by a distinct transaction with him.

In the course of regular pulpit ministrations elders, along with the minister, should watch for any special manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and follow up religious impressions by holding special services and dealing individually with inquirers. No great amount of learning is necessary to make efficient workers. Consecration to Christ, the unction of the Holy Ghost, and a burning desire to save the lost, are essential to success.

Most excellent service is frequently rendered by our elders outside their immediate charge. The aggressive work of the church is materially advanced by them in founding mission schools and conducting prayer-meetings in destitute districts. Here we may be permitted to throw out the suggestion that sometimes the churches would act wisely in selecting some elders from those classes of persons whom they seek to reach, if suitable ones can be found. Our Lord selected Matthew as an apostle from among the publicans, partly, we believe, because he was specially qualified to do mission work among them on account of his intimate acquaintance and his identification with them. An intelli-

gent, godly man, chosen as elder from the artisan class, for instance, would greatly aid the church in extending the gospel among them. We have personal knowledge of the wisdom of this course. Successful missions have often been planted by the use of this plan. Mission Sunday-schools often grow into churches. Our church rulers should use all their influence towards colonization from the mother church whenever circumstances are favorable. We have lost many very valuable opportunities for extending our cause by want of promptness in this regard. To colonize often requires great Christian self-abnegation; but we must be prepared to make such sacrifices for the grand interests of the gospel. If possible, the colony should be composed of the best material, drawn mainly from the neighborhood where the new church is to be planted.

There are many other general duties belonging to the elder's office in the way of Christian activity which can scarcely be classified. The gifts which God has bestowed upon men are various, and we cannot expect *all* elders to take part in *every* duty which belongs to their office. If this be insisted on, it will be impossible to form a session in most churches. We must use the different gifts of different men, allowing each to pursue that line of activity to which he

is best adapted. In rural districts our elders are sometimes called upon to perform duties which custom has fixed upon the minister alone. Some of these duties the elder is entirely competent to discharge, and should not hesitate to do so. For instance, when a church member dies, and no minister can be procured, it is entirely proper for him to conduct the funeral service. If he so desires, he may use a form of burial service. The writer would go even further, and acknowledge the right of elders to administer the Lord's Supper. Let any one undertake to find scriptural authority for the denial of this right, and he will find the texts for his support very scarce. Many churches might be mentioned in which there has not been a communion service for two years, because they have been without a pastor. Besides, there is much general work, such as service in evangelistic agencies, in educational and charitable causes, in the committees of the various church courts, which many of our elders are thoroughly competent to perform.

(g), The elder has most important *duties to perform in the exercise of his joint power in the meetings of session*. A full attendance is almost indispensable to efficiency, as most of these bodies number from two to five members. The average is about three to each church. They

are bound by solemn vows to attend the regular meetings, which should be held at least monthly. Business should not be conducted in a hurried or perfunctory manner. It will be found helpful to follow a docket which brings up in regular order every matter which may come up for consideration. This mode of procedure will greatly facilitate the execution of business, will prevent the omission of any important items, and will increase the efficiency of the session.

The admission of applicants to the fellowship of the church is a duty of the session in its collective capacity, which involves great responsibility. Upon its proper discharge depends largely the purity of the church. Candidates are sometimes examined and received in a very slipshod manner. The only question to be determined is, whether the applicant exercises faith in Jesus Christ, which is the sole condition of salvation. This will take him into heaven, and ought, therefore, to take him into the church. While the candidate should be spared needless catechising, it is the plain duty of the rulers of God's house to require credible evidence of saintship, and endeavor to find out whether he has an intelligent view of the way of salvation, and has sincerely and heartily embraced Christ as his Saviour. They manifest

the truest interest in him by satisfying themselves that he is a genuine believer, and trying to save him from fostering a delusion. It is no kindness to a person to receive him into the church when he is not a Christian. If the applicant is a child of pious, wise, and discreet parents, who give their consent to his union with the church, it is unnecessary to enter into a minute examination, unless his character is bad. After a revival, especially if it has been conducted by a general evangelist who uses high-pressure methods, it is wise to wait for a short time at least before opening the doors of the church for the reception of members. If converts are genuine, they will not be lost to the church by a little delay. If they are spurious, delay will give them an opportunity of finding out their mistake before the vows of God are taken upon them. In times of revival excitement, examination of candidates should be very thorough. As a rule, it is best for applicants to be examined separately. Too often elders entrust this solemn duty to impulsive and inexperienced young ministers, yielding assent to the judgment of the latter without due deliberation.

We cannot prevent the tares from growing up with the wheat, but should consider that the demand of the times is for a purer and more

consecrated church, for quality rather than quantity. We may put ourselves at a disadvantage by the side of other denominations by using great caution in receiving applicants, but in the end we will be the richer for it; for the day is coming when "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

The administration of church discipline is another important duty belonging to the session in its collective capacity. We are not disposed to croaking or pessimism, but we fear there has been a down-grade movement along this line. The reclamation of offenders and the honor of Christ demand more fidelity on the part of spiritual rulers in this respect. It is too often the case that professing Christians are allowed to continue in open and known sin without receiving a rebuke or a warning. Much wisdom and tact are necessary to deal rightly with offending members. The disposition and environment of each one should be taken into consideration; and the great end of discipline should be kept constantly in mind, viz., the welfare of the transgressor. If he is dealt with affectionately and firmly, he will generally acknowledge the truth, and it will not be necessary to have recourse to a formal trial. This subject opens up a large field for discussion, upon which the writer cannot enter at this time.

It may be said, however, that deep piety, loyalty to Christ, a good stock of common sense, and a tender, sincere interest in the spiritual welfare of offenders, will generally lead to right conclusions as to the best manner of dealing with them.

At the meetings of session, pastor and elders should consider the situation and needs of the church, and should confer together as to the best means for increasing church activity, stimulating its benevolence and deepening its piety. The roll of membership should be examined, and arrangements made for the visitation of the sick, the afflicted, and the needy. And elders should not regard themselves as advisers merely and collectors of information for the pastor, but as co-workers with him.

Sessions should not forget their relations to the ungodly community outside of the church, and should regard themselves as an aggressive body bound to render valiant service in battling with the powers of darkness. The talents and zeal of all church members should be utilized in this great work. The church will never reach the highest degree of efficiency until every member regards himself as an evangelist in the wide sense of the word. "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets."

Finally, the rulers of God's house should en-

deavor to work together in harmony and love. Any alienation between elders, any quarrels or misunderstandings, greatly impair the usefulness of the session as a court of Christ.

IV. THE ELDER IN THE HIGHER COURTS.

According to our theory, ministers and elders have equal rights in the courts of the church. As a rule they are about equally represented in point of numbers. In presbyteries and synods the elders would largely preponderate if there was a full attendance, as we have more churches than ministers. The influence they exert, however, is far below what it should be. Whatever may be our theory, there is a great defect in the application of it, so far as the judicatories of the church are concerned. As a rule, elders have very little share in the discussion of the various questions which are brought before our ecclesiastical assemblies. While it is true that their rights are not denied, yet they do not receive that encouragement and support which they justly claim.

Ministers who are trained in public speaking, and are more intimately acquainted with theological and ecclesiastical questions, are naturally expected to take a more prominent part in public discussions. At the same time, our elders should feel more deeply the grave re-

sponsibility resting upon them in their legislative, judicial, and executive capacities. They should claim their rights and show less hesitancy in the expression of their opinions. They have a perfect right to preside over presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies. Our church is beginning to put our theory into practice, and we sometimes hear of elder moderators in our courts; but the usefulness of the elder by no means depends upon his capacity as a speaker or public officer. He may render invaluable service by making brief practical suggestions, by giving wise advice in committee work, and giving careful attention to the transaction of business. Some of the best lawyers are mainly chancery lawyers, and some of the most efficient statesmen our country has produced were men who had no talent for public speaking. We know of a very successful politician who was never "on the stump." He has no gift of speech, but has wonderful power over men by his cordial manners and exhibition of strong common sense. He succeeds in winning men to himself and to his views. He may be called a "button-hole" politician. Likewise our elders, who have no oratorical gifts, may exert a wide influence by the "button-hole" method, without condescending to any of the indirections of the lobbyist or political trickster.

Their talents, their knowledge of business and of practical affairs, should be utilized more extensively for the good of the church in the higher courts. Men who are highly qualified to render efficient aid in deliberative and administrative work, in many instances, rarely find their way to our ecclesiastical meetings. A large amount of working force remains neglected and unused. The question how we may reinforce the influence of the eldership in the higher courts is a practical one, which presses upon us for solution. A too exclusive control of the affairs of the church by ministers should be studiously avoided. Monopolies have their dangers, even in the hands of good men. We believe that a larger infusion of eldership influence and power would, in a measure, correct the present tendency of our church courts to devote too much time to the discussion of nice ecclesiastical and theological points, and to the transaction of mere routine business. Our courts have a vast deal of work to do which is closely connected with the life of the church and the progress of the gospel throughout the world. They should give much time and thought to the great work of Home and Foreign Missions. Ways and means should be devised for overtaking the destitutions within their bounds, for reaching the neglected classes,

for encouraging and supporting weak churches, and for stimulating interest in the progress of the kingdom of our Lord.

Our elders are generally very practical men, and are disposed to view matters which relate to the interests of the church from a practical, rather than a theological, standpoint. Their minds are not so much concerned about the exact constitutionality of projected schemes and enterprises as about their feasibility and results. There is a serious difficulty in the way of greater efficiency on the part of elders in our ecclesiastical assemblies. It is the custom of most sessions to distribute their honors so that the same representative is rarely sent to presbytery or synod twice in succession. Thus there is a want of intimacy with current business which puts him at a disadvantage. Besides, most of our elders are business men so closely confined to their work that they cannot always make it convenient to attend the courts after they have been elected as representatives, and often they are compelled to withdraw from the meetings at a very important stage of their proceedings on account of engagements which are unavoidable. They should strenuously endeavor to arrange their affairs so that they may be able to remain throughout the session. A large amount of most important business is

often rushed through on the last day when only a handful of presbyters are present.

Our elders who attend ecclesiastical meetings so irregularly will find it greatly to their advantage to keep themselves posted upon all questions agitating the mind of the church, and upon all matters likely to arise in the courts, especially the presbytery. They should read the church papers carefully, and utilize every available source of knowledge, that they may be prepared, if called upon, to take an intelligent part as presbyters in the administration of spiritual affairs. Many are models in this respect. They are well informed and wide awake. They speak well and to the point on most questions, and their influence is felt.

We wish to emphasize the fact that our Presbyterian system embodies the grand idea of the unity of the church. Each church with its officers is a part of the great whole, and is organically connected with it. The spiritual rulers of a congregation belong, in a certain sense, to the church as a whole, and have duties to discharge growing out of this relation. In the presbytery they are not to consider merely the interests of their individual churches, but must devote themselves to the work of presbyterial oversight and inspection. Presbyterianism is a little weak at this point, and there is a ten-

dency in some of our churches to Congregationalism. Our church has often been remiss in the exercise of the Episcopal function. Hence our members sometimes say that we need a bishop. Our elders may do much to strengthen our system at this point of weakness by teaching the people that the presbytery is practically their bishop, and by insisting upon the assertion of presbyterial authority and a regular system of oversight. We do not believe in a one-man rule, but it is better than no rule. Monarchy is better than anarchy. Our church government contains adequate provision for effective oversight and inspection. We may have all the benefits of the Episcopal system without any of its evils. Congregations are often practically left to themselves, however, and fail to realize that they are under authority. They do not fully grasp the idea that they are a part of a great organism, and subject to their spiritual rulers. As in our political government, representatives who are sent to Congress are charged, not merely with the interests of their constituency, but with those of the government at large, so the church representatives in our General Assembly are expected to legislate for the good of all under its care. They should feel that they are directly responsible to Jesus Christ, who is head

over all things to the church, and the sole administrator of the kingdom of grace. He is the source of all spiritual life and of all spiritual power, and he has ordained the church to be the great agent for the evangelization of the world.

Christ has given the church an organization which is sufficient to develop and direct the energies of his people in the most effectual way, so that she is thoroughly equipped for her great work. It is the duty of his people faithfully and carefully to guard her as a divine institution, to uphold her sacred ordinances, and insist upon her prerogatives. "He gave some apostles and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and some teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

CHAPTER III.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS.

THE qualifications of elders are plainly laid down in the word of God. Titus i.

5-9: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee; if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

1 Timothy iii. 2-7: "A bishop (presbyter) then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children

in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Our Book of Church Order sums up the qualifications as follows: "Those who fill this office ought to be blameless in life and sound in the faith; they should be men of wisdom and discretion; and by the holiness of their walk and conversation should be examples to the flock." In detailing the duties of elders we necessarily anticipated some of the qualifications.

The passages quoted from Timothy and Titus lay special emphasis upon *Christian character*. The indispensable and supreme qualification for a ruling elder is piety. First of all, he must be a godly, spiritually-minded man. The religious condition of a church depends largely upon the spiritual character of its officers. Their influence is felt through the whole congregation.

The church ruler, therefore, should "take heed unto himself as well as unto the doctrine." His real worth is the measure of his influence.

His piety is the measure of his power with God and with man. It becomes him to seek earnestly to be imbued with the mind of Christ and to be filled with the Holy Ghost. All the duties which devolve upon him are very closely related to godliness. Without this trait, administrative ability, knowledge, gift of speech, wealth and popularity will be of little avail. If he is a truly godly man, a man of faith and prayer, other important qualifications will naturally follow. But though piety is indispensable, it is not the only qualification. Our congregations should be taught that not every church member who is a devout Christian is qualified, as a matter of course, to be a ruler in the house of God. When we consider the duties belonging to this office, it is evident that intelligence, practical wisdom, experience, and administrative capacity are likewise necessary.

The best and wisest men among us should be selected. Our people should keep in mind that this office is not a mere arrangement of human expediency arising out of certain felt necessities, but finds its origin and authority in apostolic teaching and example. Congregations sometimes make a sad and egregious mistake in electing a man to the eldership because they wish to pay him a compliment, or because he occupies high social position and

possesses wealth and distinction. Wealth unquestionably gives power and influence; but neither riches nor wealth nor social position can qualify a man to be a ruler in God's house. It is a matter of great importance that elders should be men of intelligence and influence. They are sometimes called upon to deal officially with questions of vast importance and to grapple with problems which perplex the ablest thinkers and theologians. To be destitute of mental capacity is to be disqualified for the elder's office. We are well aware of the fact that nearly all of our churches have great difficulty in securing a staff of thoroughly competent men for the eldership. As the work of the government of the church must be carried on, congregations are frequently under the necessity of choosing men who are below the scriptural standard. As a rule, the best men among us are to be found in our sessions, and many of them are noble, consecrated men, who have contributed largely to the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

The apostle tells us that an elder should be "apt to teach." As we have already intimated, the reference is not necessarily to public and official instruction. There must be, however, some faculty for the communication of knowledge. It is important that our elders should

use every opportunity within their reach to store their minds with religious knowledge. They should be faithful and prayerful students of God's word, so that they may be able to work efficiently in the Sunday-school and the Bible-class, and guide inquirers intelligently. They should study carefully the standards of the church, and be able to explain the scriptural grounds of Presbyterianism. Soundness in the faith is an important qualification. The churches which were planted and nourished by the apostles began to deteriorate very soon after their death, and errors of all kinds crept in through false teachers. The rapid departure of some of the apostolic churches from the simplicity which is in Christ and from purity of doctrine clearly shows the necessity of having sound and orthodox rulers.

If our elders, as a whole, fall below the scriptural standard, the fault does not lie altogether with them. The ministry must share the blame. Many of our elders have never had any training for their work; nor have they always been encouraged to take part in the administration of spiritual affairs. The gap between the actual and the ideal elder, probably, is not greater than that between the actual and the ideal minister. It is somewhat remarkable that Presbyterians should be such sticklers for an educated

ministry, and at the same time lay such little stress upon the training and education of elders, who, according to their theory, belong to the same general office, being only distinguished by a difference of function. We insist that our candidates for the ministry shall take a thorough course of training as preliminary to their official service, and yet we pay little or no attention to the training of elders. As they serve the church gratuitously, and must toil for a livelihood, having usually a family to support, they cannot reasonably be expected to take a regular course of instruction in a seminary, or even under the pastor. No attempt, we believe, has been made to give them a regular professional training; but very important ends would be served if we could have regular elders' conferences, once or twice a year, lasting from one to two weeks. At these meetings they might be greatly edified by lectures delivered by ministers or elders, who have had large experience and are thoroughly acquainted with the duties of the office. Ministers have clubs and conferences, the object of which is to stimulate and help each other in their work, and to increase their efficiency. Sunday-school teachers hold institutes at which they have model teaching and object lessons, and lectures from experts, to increase their usefulness. The Young Men's

Christian Associations and the Christian Endeavor Societies have regular conferences which prove very profitable. Why should not the elders of a presbytery or a synod hold similar meetings for the enlargement of their ideas, for mutual edification, and obtainment of greater efficiency in their work? This large, influential, and noble body of men should receive every encouragement from the ministry and from the people, and should have the benefit of all the aids within their reach. The elder who reads these pages may be discouraged on account of the very high standard of duty which is advocated. Let him remember that ideals rightly used not only produce a blessed discontent, but at the same time stimulate and inspire. They prevent stagnation. They lift us up and make us aggressive.

PART II.

FORMS, HELPS AND SUGGESTIONS.

PART II.

FORMS, HELPS AND SUGGESTIONS.

I.

*SELECTIONS OF SCRIPTURE AND A FORM
OF PRAYER FOR THE USE OF THE
ELDER IN THE SICK ROOM.*

SELECTIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

(1.) THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

PSALM xxiii.—“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

JOHN x. 1-18.—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them; but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the

sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

(2.) THE SECURITY OF THE CHRISTIAN.

ROMANS viii. 26-39.—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

JOHN x. 26-30.—“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.”

(3.) THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS.

HEBREWS ii. 9-18.—“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of

the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."

HEBREWS iv. 14-16.—"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

(4.) PRAISE AND THANKFULNESS.

PSALM ciii.—"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniqui-

ties ; who healeth all thy diseases ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies ; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things ; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide : neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins ; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame ; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass : as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone ; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children ; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do

them. The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearken-
ing unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul."

A FORM OF PRAYER FOR THE SICK.

Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, look down, we beseech thee, with tender compassion upon thy servant confined to a bed of sickness. Grant, in thy good providence, that *he* may be restored to health and strength. Thou has invited us to make known to thee all the desires of our hearts, and to spread before thee all our troubles, our griefs, and our pains. Our hope is in thee. To whom else shall we go? Thou art almighty, thou art infinitely kind and gracious, and thou art our Father. In the plentitude of thy grace and goodness spare thy servant, and grant *him* patience and submission under *his* sufferings. Sanctify to *him* *his* trials, and may they work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Grant *him* a sweet and comforting sense of thy nearness and the blessed assurance of thy love

and forgiveness. Enable *him* to repose in quiet confidence upon thy promises and thy covenant faithfulness. O blessed Lord, we have nothing to fear if thou art with us. Thou art a sun and a shield. Thou wilt give grace and glory, and no good thing wilt thou withhold from them that walk uprightly. Hold thou us up, and we shall be safe—safe for time, and safe for eternity. Brighten the hope of thy servant, the precious hope of a glorious immortal life. Part the clouds that lie between *him* and thee, and let the light of thy face beam upon *him*. May *he* be enabled to look forward with joy to the hour when God shall wipe away every tear, and there shall be no more pain. Comfort the heart of thy servant, and may *he* commit all *his* interests to thee for time and for eternity, rejoicing in the assurance that all things work together for good to them that love God. We cast ourselves upon thy mercy in Christ Jesus. Fill us with thy Spirit and grace, so that when thou shalt call us hence we may joyfully respond, saying, Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. As we pass through the valley of death, may we lean upon thy staff, and say, in triumph, I fear no evil, for thou art with me. Grant us an easy and safe passage through the gate of death, and crown us thine in thy kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

If desirable, some suitable hymn may be sung, such as "Jesus, Lover of my Soul," "Our Times are in Thy Hands," or "My Faith Looks up to Thee."

II.

SELECTIONS OF SCRIPTURE AND A FORM OF PRAYER FOR THE USE OF THE ELDER IN THE CHAMBER OF BEREAVEMENT.

SELECTIONS.

(1.) SUBMISSION.

HEBREW xii. 1-17.—"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the

Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him : for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons ; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence : shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live ? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure ; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees ; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way ; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord : looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God ; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled ; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel

of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

(2.) COMFORT.

JOHN xiv. 1-27.—"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the

Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. . . . He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said

unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

(3.) SAFETY.

PSALM xci.—"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in

darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

(4.) PRECIOUS CONSOLATIONS.

2 CORINTHIANS iv. 17, 18.—"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not

seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

ISAIAH xliii. 2, 3.—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee."

1 PETER iv. 12, 13.—"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

JOB v. 17-19.—"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee."

JAMES i. 2-5.—"My brethen, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh

patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

1 PETER i. 7.—"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

ISAIAH xlix. 13.—"Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted."

A FORM OF PRAYER FOR THE BEREAVED.

Most merciful and gracious Father, we acknowledge thee as the all-wise ruler of the universe, and the disposer of all events. Our times are in thy hands. Thou givest life, and thou takest it away, and thou art our Father. We cannot comprehend the mystery of thy providence, but we know that thou art good and merciful and kind. Thou, who didst not spare thine only Son, but didst deliver him up for us all, wilt surely with him freely give us all things. Most merciful God, draw very near

to thy servant in *his* bereavement, and grant *him* the blessed consolations of thy grace. Give *him* grace that he may appropriate the precious promises of thy word, and enjoy sweet repose in thee. May no murmuring escape *his* lips. Vouchsafe to *him* that strong faith which will lead *him* to say: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Help thy servant to realize that affliction is thine own appointed training-school for immortality. O blessed Jesus, who hast tasted sorrow's bitterest cup, grant that thine afflicted servant may feel the sweetness of thine own tender sympathy. Thou, who didst weep at the grave of Lazarus, and mingle thy sighs, sobs, and tears with those of the sorrowing sisters of Bethany, comfort thy servant with thy love and presence, with the glorious hope of the resurrection and of the re-union of loved ones in the better world. We thank thee, our Father, that we are not called upon to sorrow as those who have no hope. We thank thee for all the sweet consolations of our own holy religion which cheer and support us in times of grief. Grant that the removal of our earthly props may cause us to lean more entirely on thee. May every earthly trial drive us closer to thee, and open to us more clearly the better world, where sorrow and sighing shall flee away forever. Bestow upon us divine

grace, that we may be able to bear patiently all things which thy chastising love sees fit to appoint. Sanctify this dispensation of thy providence to thy bereaved servant, and bring us all at last into our Father's house on high, and we shall never cease to praise thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

III.

A FORM OF SERVICE FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

THE SERVICE AT A PRIVATE HOUSE OR IN CHURCH.

"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

"We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

(Here let the elder read one of the following selections from Scripture):

(a.) FOR GENERAL SERVICE.

PSALM xc.—"Lord, thou hast been our dwellingplace in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst

formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have

seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

OR, 1 CORINTHIANS xv. 20-57.—"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead

rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

“But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put

on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(b.) FOR A CHILD.

2 SAMUEL xii. 15-23.—“And Nathan departed unto his house. And the Lord struck the child that Uriah’s wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth; but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And

they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

MATTHEW xviii. 1-6.—"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of

these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

(c.) FOR AN AGED PERSON.

PSALM xcii. 12-15.—"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that he planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

GENESIS xlvii. 9.—"And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

JOB v. 26.—"Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season."

ISAIAH xlvi. 4.—"And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you."

[*Here the elder may use the following form of prayer*]:

O God our Father, we come to thee at this time with burdened hearts. But thou art a sufficient help in every time of need. Thou art the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. We beseech thee, our Father, to soothe and sustain those upon whom thou hast laid thine afflicting hand. Grant them willing submission to thy holy will, and fill them with the comforts of thy salvation. May the lesson of this dispensation be laid to heart, and may thy sorrowing ones be sanctified through the discipline of thy providence. May we learn to set our affections upon things above, and not upon things that are upon the earth. Oh, help us to heed the voice of thy rod, and to sit loose to the things of the world. Bring us into closer union and communion with thyself, and give us a stronger hold upon things unseen and eternal. Impress upon us the transitory and unsatisfactory nature of all earthly good, and fix our hearts upon the imperishable treasures of heaven.

We thank thee, our Father, for the precious hope given to thy children of a renewal in a brighter and happier world of the ties which are sundered here on earth. Beyond the weeping we shall be soon, and the sad partings of

earth shall be forgotten as we pass into the sweet fellowship of kindred spirits on high, and into blessed and uninterrupted communion with our glorified Lord and Saviour. May this hope sanctify us and cheer our hearts as we walk amid the shadows of earth. Prepare us all for the change which awaits us, and may we behold thy face in righteousness, and drink forever of the rivers of thy pleasure. And to thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all the praise and the glory forever. Amen.

Here a suitable hymn may be sung, such as "Jesus, Lover of my Soul," or "Asleep in Jesus," or "How Blest the Righteous," or "Beyond the Smiling and the Weeping."

SERVICE AT THE GRAVE.

[*After the body has been lowered into the grave the elder shall say*]: Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take out of this world the soul of our departed *brother*, we commit *his* body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. And we look for the general resurrection in the last day and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose second coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead, and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in him shall

be changed and made like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.”

CLOSING PRAYER.

Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for the victory won over death and the grave by thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour. We bless thee for the precious hope born of his resurrection victory. May it cheer and sustain us as we stand by this fresh-made grave of our departed loved one.

May the resurrection of our blessed Lord be to us a pledge and guarantee of our resurrection. Grant that we may live in closer fellowship with our risen Lord, and may seek more earnestly those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. And when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, may we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And to thy name be the praise forever. Amen.

IV.

DIRECTIONS FOR CONDUCTING A SERVICE FOR A
SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

1. The services may be opened with a hymn. (*All the children should be required to join in the singing.*)

2. Reading of the Sunday-school lesson, in which the Superintendent and the school read verses alternately. The whole school should be required to join in the reading.

3. Prayer. [*Here the Superintendent may use the following prayer*]: Our Father in heaven, as we are gathered to-day to study thy holy word, we invoke the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit. Open thou our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law. May thy word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our pathway. Help us to treasure up in our minds and hearts its precious teachings, and practice them in our daily lives. Let thy blessing rest upon this school. May all the teachers be diligent, faithful, and earnest. Grant that all the pupils may lay to heart the instructions which are imparted to them. We beseech thee, our Father, that thy truth may find a lodgment in every heart, and bring forth fruit unto eternal life. May these children remember their Creator in the days of

their youth, and give their hearts to Christ before they have been hardened by sin. Oh, grant us the enlightening, convincing, renewing influences of thy Holy Spirit in all our services. May this school be a nursery for Christ, from which shall go forth many who shall be a blessing to the church and to the world. Bless the services of this hour, and may great good be done this day in the name of the holy child Jesus. And all these blessings we ask through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

4. Hymn.

5. [*Here the teachers are called upon to take their classes and go through the lesson with their pupils.*]

6. The lessons being concluded, the Superintendent may ask the school to give the Golden Text. He may also ask several leading questions concerning the lesson. Several questions from the Shorter Catechism may be asked in this connection. The Superintendent, if so inclined, may sum up the teachings of the lesson in a few minutes' talk, and endeavor to impress them upon the school.

7. Collection and report of the number of teachers and pupils present.

8. Hymn.

9. The Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer, in which the whole school unites.

THE CREED.

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; which was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. The third day he arose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.”

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

“Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.”

[If the Superintendent prefers to omit the creed, he may ask the school to join him in offering the Lord's Prayer.]

V.

SUGGESTIONS IN REGARD TO PUBLIC WORSHIP FOR
THE USE OF ELDERS IN THE ABSENCE OF THE
PASTOR.

1. Hymn. [Opening hymn, such as, "Come, Thou Almighty King," or "Awake, my Soul, to Joyful Lays," or "Holy Ghost, with Light Divine."]

2. Reading of Scripture.

3. Prayer. [*The elder may use the following prayer*]: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who in thy good providence hast permitted us to meet in thy house, enable us to worship thee in the beauty of holiness. We adore thee for all thy perfections and thy glorious grace. We magnify thee as the ruler and governor of the world, as the Father of lights, as the God of all comfort. We render thee our hearty thanks for thy great goodness to us and to all men. Thou art merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. From thy bountiful hand we are daily supplied, and thy mercies are fresh to us every morning. We thank thee, above all things, for the unspeakable gift of thy dear Son, our Lord, through whose merits alone we hope for a blessed immortality.

We humbly confess before thee our many

sins and shortcomings; our offences are more in number than the sand. Help us to feel the sins we own, and turn from them with full purpose of heart, and endeavor after new obedience. Deliver us from the dominion and love of sin, and make us holy in heart and life. Let thy benediction rest upon this congregation. Suit thy blessing to the needs of each one. Thou knowest all our cares, troubles and sorrows. Brighten every home represented here to-day by thy presence and love, and remove every cause of disturbance or friction. Comfort the afflicted. Restore the sick to health. Cheer the despondent. Help all who are oppressed with care to cast their burdens upon the Lord. Bless the careless and impenitent, and lead them to Christ. Restore the backsliding. Remember in great mercy our country. Bless the chief magistrate of our nation, and all that are in authority. May they rule in thy fear, and may the people lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty. Look down in mercy upon a world lying in sin, and prosper thy church everywhere. Send the gospel to the dark places of the earth, and may the time soon come when the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters the great deep. And all these things we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

4. Hymn. [Some devotional hymn, such as "Nearer, my God, to Thee," or "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say," or "What a Friend we have in Jesus."]

5. Collection of offerings. [*Here the elder may state the object of the collection, whether for one of the Assembly's objects of benevolence, or for church expenses, and may make any explanation he sees fit.*]

6. The elder may give an explanation of some passage of Scripture, or make a talk on any religious subject which has engaged his thoughts, or he may read a sermon from some good volume, or he may read some lessons from Scripture.

[*There are many good volumes of sermons from which a selection may be made, such as "Kerr's Day-Dawn and the Rain"; "Contrary Winds," by Dr. Taylor, of New York; "Spurgeon's Sermons," "Talmage's Sermons," "Moody's Discourses," etc., etc.*]

7. *Concluding prayer*: O Lord, our God, deeply impress upon us the teachings of thy word this day. May the lessons we have heard with our outward ears sink into our hearts, and bring forth fruit in holy living. May the services of thy house be helpful to us, and may we retire to our several homes strengthened, cheered, and more fully determined to serve

thee with all fidelity. May our improvement correspond with our privileges, and may we grow daily in every Christian grace and virtue. Guide and sustain us amid all the perplexities and temptations of life, and finally receive us to thyself, for Christ's sake. Amen.

8. Hymn. [*A hymn may be selected which bears upon the Scripture lesson.*]

Doxology.

VI.

SUGGESTIONS AS TO ORDER OF SERVICE FOR A PRAYER-MEETING.

[*The elder should endeavor to avoid stiffness and formality as much as possible, and make this service a popular one. The people should be urged to sit in a body.*]

1. Hymn. [*Select familiar hymns from "Gospel Hymns," generally used in prayer-meetings, such as "In the cross of Christ, I glory," or "More love to thee, O Christ," etc.*]

2. Prayer. We thank thee, O Lord, our God, for the blessed privilege of prayer. As we now draw aside for a brief season from the cares and concerns of the world, meet with us, and manifest thyself to us graciously, and bless us. We need thee every day and every hour. We are prone to forget thee, and to fall into

sin and indifference. O, sustain us by thy grace, and give us the victory over self and sin. Help us to be faithful followers of Christ. Make us useful and earnest Christians, and may thy cause be very near our hearts. Use us for the good of our fellow-men and the furtherance of thy kingdom. May the services of this hour conduce to our spiritual growth and to the honor and glory of thy name. And may thy blessing ever rest upon us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

3. Hymn.

4. [*Here the elder may call upon some one to lead in prayer, if any one present is willing. The prayers should be short and pointed.*]

5. Reading the Scripture.

6. [*Here the elder may make some remarks upon the passage read, and then open the meeting for short talks from brethren, or he may talk on any religious subject which strikes him as suitable for the occasion.*]

7. Hymn.

Doxology.

Sometimes the elder may find it profitable to give a Bible reading instead of a talk on a single passage. He may select several passages bearing upon a topic, and designate certain ones present to read aloud the verses as they are announced. Brief comments may be

made on the passages just after they are read. Such books as *Notes and Suggestions for Bible Readings*, edited by S. R. Briggs and John H. Elliott (F. H. Revell, 148 and 150 Madison street, Chicago, Ill.), will be found very helpful.

VII.

HOW TO CALL A PASTOR.

If a church is without a pastor, prompt measures should be taken to secure one. The elders should have a meeting and appoint a committee to make diligent inquiry after a suitable man. They might write to the chairman of Presbyterian Home Missions, and to other ministers of their acquaintance, asking them to interest themselves in their behalf; or they might hold direct correspondence with some minister whom they may have in view as pastor. Our Book of Order gives the following instructions: The pastor must be elected by the members of the church. The session is required to give public notice of the election to be held at the usual place of worship, so that all the members may be present, and they are required to convene them when requested by a majority of voters.

If a minister cannot be conveniently obtained,

one of the elders may preside over the meeting. The blessing and guidance of Almighty God should be invoked before the church proceeds to elect. When they are convened, the Moderator shall put the question, "Are you ready to proceed to the election?" If they declare themselves ready, the Moderator shall call for nominations; or the election may proceed by ballot without nominations. A majority of all the voters present is necessary to elect, and only church members in regular standing are entitled to vote. When a pastor is elected, the Moderator must proceed to draw a call in the following form :

FORM OF CALL.

The church of being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you,, and having good hopes from our past experience (or knowledge) of your labors, that your ministrations in the gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation, promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support and encouragement in the Lord. And that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of, in regularly monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, or

annual payments, during the time of your being and continuing the regular pastor of this church.

In testimony whereof, we have respectively subscribed our names this day of

Attested by A. B., Moderator of the meeting.

On account of inconvenience, it is not usual for the members of the church to place their signatures to the call. So it is necessary for some one to make a motion that the ruling elders and deacons, or a committee (names designated) be empowered to sign for the church. After this motion is carried, the Moderator must certify in writing that the persons were appointed for that purpose by public vote, and that the call is in due order. The Moderator may give some such certificate as this:

"I hereby certify that the persons signing this call were regularly appointed to do so for the church, and also that the call has been made out according to the requirements of the Book."

(Signed),

"A. B.," *Moderator.*

One or more commissioners must be appointed to present and prosecute the call before the presbytery. If the minister called be from another presbytery, the commissioners

appointed must prosecute the call before the presbytery to which he belongs, having gotten a certificate from their own presbytery that the call is in order, and having obtained permission to prosecute it.

VIII.

A DOCKET, OR PROGRAMME, FOR SESSIONAL USE.

1. Session opened with prayer, and names of members present recorded.

2. The minutes of last meeting read.

3. Excuses of absentees.

4. Unfinished business.

5. Reception of members by letter or by examination.

6. Any members to be dismissed by letter to other churches ; or, have any members moved to other churches without calling for their letters ?

7. Are there any in the congregation sick or in need, and how shall they be attended to ?

8. Are there any strangers in the community who have Presbyterian affiliations and might be induced to identify themselves with this church or congregation ?

9. Are there any parents who are neglecting the baptism of their children ? What means

shall be used to bring them to a sense of their duty?

10. Are there any members who are neglecting public worship, or have fallen into sin, and are bringing reproach upon the church? If so, what steps shall be taken to reach them? Are there any in need of discipline?

11. Are there any especially interested in the subject of religion?

12. New business, or any matters concerning the general spiritual interests of the church.

13. Election of representatives to Presbytery, and reports from same (spring and fall). Election of representatives to Synod, and report from the same (fall).

14. Minutes read and corrected.

15. Session closed with prayer.

IX.

A CONSTITUTION FOR A CHRISTIAN WORKERS' ASSOCIATION.

I. This society shall be called the "Christian Workers' Association."

II. Its object is to promote piety among its members and to make them more useful in the service of God, and to extend the interests of Christ's kingdom in the community by active Christian work.

III. The officers of this society shall be a President, Vice-President, and Secretary. There shall be a re-election of officers every year. (The President is ordinarily an elder, but not necessarily.)

IV. This society shall have the following committees, which shall report concerning the work assigned to them at every regular meeting :

1. *Committee on Strangers*.—This committee shall look after all strangers who may attend the services of the church, give them a cordial welcome, invite them to return, and give their names to the pastor. If the church is in town, the committee shall visit hotels and boarding-houses just before preaching and invite strangers to attend, either by cards or personal interview. They shall also visit strangers who settle in the community having Presbyterian affiliations.

2. *Sunday-School Committee*.—This committee shall endeavor to find out, by inquiry and visitation, children who are neglected, or who attend no Sunday-school, and shall seek to induce them to attend Sunday-school. They shall also look after the general interests of the school, and try to advance it in every proper way.

3. *Committee to Visit the Sick and the Destitute*.—This committee shall visit the members

of the church and congregation who are sick, and look after any who may be in need.

4. *Committee on Literature*.—This committee shall collect the religious papers of the congregation after they are read and distribute them where they are most needed. They shall also do everything in their power to circulate good religious literature in the way of Bibles, tracts, and books.

5. *Pastor's Aid Committee*.—This committee shall watch for any who may be interested in the subject of religion, and inform the pastor of the same. They shall inform him from week to week of any who may be sick or in trouble and need his attention. They shall keep in close touch with the pastor to assist in every way he may direct.

Other committees be added according to the needs of the church and community.

The society may hold its meetings fortnightly or monthly in connection with the week-day services of the church, or may have a separate service. It is under the control of the session, and the pastor is a member *ex-officio*. Some devotional exercises should always be held with every meeting. Every member of the society should be placed on some committee, and should feel bound to engage in some form of active work.

X.

RULES OF PARLIAMENTARY ORDER FOR THE GUIDANCE OF RULING ELDERS IN THE COURTS OF THE CHURCH.

The following rules of parliamentary order were adopted by the General Assembly in 1866 for its own guidance. While they do not form a part of the constitution of the church, they are in general use in our presbyteries and synods.

RULES OF PARLIAMENTARY ORDER.

Of Opening the Sessions.

1. The Moderator shall take the chair precisely at the hour to which the court stands adjourned; shall immediately call the members to order; and on the appearance of a quorum, the session shall be opened with prayer.

2. If a quorum be assembled at the hour appointed, and the Moderator be absent, the last Moderator, or oldest minister present, shall take the chair without delay.

3. If a quorum be not assembled at the hour appointed, any two members shall be competent to adjourn from time to time, that an opportunity may be given for a quorum to assemble.

4. After calling the roll, and marking the

absentees, the minutes of the last sitting shall be read, and, if requisite, corrected.

*Of the Moderator.*³

5. It shall be the duty of the Moderator to preserve order, and to conduct all business before the court to a speedy and proper result.

6. He is to propose to the court every subject of deliberation that comes before it.

7. He may propose what appears to him the most regular and direct way of bringing any business to issue.

8. He shall always announce the names of members arising to speak, prevent them from interrupting each other, and require them in speaking always to address the chair.

9. He shall prevent a speaker from deviating from the subject and from using personal reflections.

10. He shall silence those who refuse to observe order.

11. He shall prevent members leaving the court without his permission.

12. He shall, when the deliberations are ended, put the question, and call the vote.

13. In all questions he shall give a clear and concise statement of the object of the vote, and the vote being taken, he shall declare how the question is decided.

14. He shall carefully keep notes of the orders of the day and call them up at the times appointed.

15. He may speak to points of order in preference to other members, rising from his seat for that purpose, and shall decide questions of order subject to an appeal to the court, without debate, by any two members.

16. If any member consider himself aggrieved by any decision of the Moderator, it shall be his privilege to appeal to the court, and the question on such appeal shall be taken without debate.

17. It is his duty to appoint all committees, except in those cases in which the court shall decide otherwise.

18. When a vote is taken by ballot, or by yeas and nays, he shall vote with the other members; in other cases, when the court is equally divided, he shall possess the casting vote. If he be not willing to decide, he shall put the question a second time; and if the court be again equally divided, and he declines to give his vote, the question shall be lost.

19. He may call any member to the chair to preside temporarily.

Of the Clerk.

20. As soon as possible after the commence-

ment of the first session of every court, the clerk shall form a complete roll of the members present, and put the same into the hands of the Moderator; and whenever any additional members take their seats, he shall add their names in their proper places to the said roll.

21. He shall immediately file all papers in the order in which they have been read, with proper endorsements, and keep them in perfect order.

Of the Order of Business.

22. After the reading of the minutes of the preceding day, the following order of business shall be observed:

- (a), Communications addressed to the body;
- (b), Reports of standing committees;
- (c), Reports of select committees;
- (d), Resolutions;

each of which papers may, by unanimous consent, be taken up immediately on presentation, but if objection be made, it shall be docketed.

Secondly. The unfinished business in which the court was engaged at the last preceding adjournment in preference to the orders of the day; but such unfinished business may, on motion, without debate, be laid on the table, to proceed with the special order.

Thirdly. As soon as the special order and the unfinished business are disposed of, the

business on the docket will be called ; but motions to elect officers, to appoint committees, and to enroll members, shall always be in order, unless a member is speaking or the court is voting.

Of Motions.

23. A motion must be seconded and afterward repeated by the Moderator, or read aloud, before it is debated ; but this shall be no bar to an explanation of the object of any motion by the mover, provided he does not exceed five minutes ; and every motion shall be reduced to writing if the Moderator or any member require it.

24. The mover of a resolution is entitled to the floor, if he so desire, after the Moderator has stated the question.

Of Withdrawal of Motions.

25. Any member who shall have made a motion shall have liberty to withdraw it, with the consent of his second, before any debate has taken place thereon, but not afterward, without leave of the court.

Of Limitations of Debate.

26. Motions to lay on the table, to docket, to take up business, and to adjourn, and the call for the question, shall be put without debate.

On questions of order, postponement, or commitment, no member shall speak more than once. On all other questions each member may speak twice, but not oftener, without express leave of the court.

Of Privileged Questions.

27. When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received unless to adjourn, to docket, to lay on the table, to amend, to postpone indefinitely, to postpone to a day certain, or to commit, which several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they are herein arranged, and the motion for adjournment shall always be in order.

Of the Question.

28. When any member shall have called for "the question," the Moderator shall, without debate, put the vote, "Is the court ready for the question?" If the call be seconded by a majority of the members present, the vote shall immediately be taken on the pending question, whatever it may be, without further debate.

Of Division of the Question.

29. If a motion under debate contains several parts, any two members may have it divided, and a question taken on each part.

Of Amendments.

30. An amendment may be moved on any question, as also an amendment to the amendment, which shall be decided before the original proposition; but two distinct amendments to the pending question shall not be entertained at the same time, whether moved as substitutes for the whole matter, or as changing any part thereof.

31. One proposition may be substituted for another, when the substitute covers the whole matter of the original, and this shall be done by moving to strike out the original, and to insert the substitute.

Of Reconsideration.

32. A question shall not be reconsidered at the same sessions of the court at which it has been decided, unless by the consent of a majority of the members who were present at the decision, and unless the motion to reconsider be made by the person who voted with the majority.

33. A subject which has been indefinitely postponed shall not be again called up during the same sessions of the court, unless by the consent of three-fourths of the members who were present at the decision.

Of Speakers.

34. If more than one member rise to speak at the same time, the member who is most distant from the Moderator's chair shall speak first.

35. Every member, when speaking, shall address himself to the Moderator and shall treat his fellow members, and especially the Moderator with decorum and respect.

Of Interruptions.

36. No speaker shall be interrupted unless he be out of order or for the purpose of correcting mistakes or misrepresentations.

Of Voting.

37. Members shall not decline voting unless excused by the court.

38. When various motions are made with respect to the filing of blanks with particular members or times, the question shall always be first taken on the highest number and the longest time.

39. When the Moderator has commenced taking the vote, no further debate or remark shall be permitted, unless there has evidently been a mistake, in which case the mistake shall be rectified, and the Moderator shall recommence taking the vote.

40. The yeas and nays on any question

shall not be recorded unless it be required by one-third of the members present; and every member shall vote "yea" or "nay," unless excused by the court. In a judicial case, members thus excused shall not be allowed to vote in any of the subsequent proceedings relating thereto.

41. In all elections it shall require a majority of the votes cast to elect.

Of Committees.

42. The person first named on any committee shall be considered as the chairman thereof, whose duty it shall be to convene the committee and preside therein, and in case of his absence or inability to act, the second named member shall take his place and perform his duties.

Of Private Sessions.

43. All courts have a right to sit in private on business which, in their judgment, ought not to be a matter of public speculation.

Of the Committee of the Whole.

44. Every court has a right to resolve itself into a committee of the whole, or to hold what are commonly called interlocutory meetings, in which members may freely converse together without the formalities necessary in their ordi-

nary proceedings. In all such cases the Moderator shall name the member who is to preside as chairman. If the committee be unable to agree, a motion may be made that the committee rise, and upon the adoption of such motion the Moderator shall resume the chair, and the chairman of the committee shall report what has been done, and ask that the committee be discharged, which being allowed, the matter shall be dropped. If the committee shall agree upon the report to be made, or have made progress in the same without coming to a conclusion, the committee may rise, report what has been done, and if the case require, may ask leave to sit again; or the committee of the whole may be dissolved, and the question considered by the court in the usual order of business.

Of Decorum.

45. Without express permission no member of the court, while business is going on, shall engage in private conversation; nor shall members address one another, nor any person present, but through the Moderator.

46. When more than three members of the court shall be standing at the same time, the Moderator shall require all to take their seats, the person only excepted who may be speaking.

47. If any member act in any respect in a disorderly manner, it shall be the privilege of any member, and the duty of the Moderator, to call him to order.

48. No member shall retire from any court without the leave of the Moderator, nor withdraw from it to return home without the consent of the court.

Of Cases Unprovided For.

49. All cases that may arise, not provided for in the foregoing rules, shall be governed by the general principles of parliamentary law.

Of Closing the Sessions.

50. The Moderator of every court, above the church session, in finally closing its sessions, in addition to prayer, may cause to be sung an appropriate psalm or hymn, and shall pronounce the apostolic benediction.

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